

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. Operator interface equipped with a touch-sensitive display unit for outputting display objects and a processing unit, comprising:
  - a) first means to process at least:
    - a1) industrial display data of a first (AZ) of the display objects to represent a technical process and
    - a2) display data of a second of the display objects (K) to simulate an on-screen keyboard (K) having keyboard elements (T),
  - b) second means to superimpose the display data of the first and the second display objects such that the on-screen keyboard (K) and the first display object (AZ) appear mutually transparent on the touch-sensitive display unit,
  - c) third means to detect an input position (P) on the touch-sensitive display unit, and
  - d) fourth means to associate the detected input position (P) with one of the keyboard elements (T) of the on-screen keyboard (K) and to initiate an action associated with the keyboard element (T),

wherein the display data of the first and second display objects are coupled such that using a keyboard element (T) of the second display object (K) initiates an action influencing the industrial display data of the first display object (AZ) and causes effects of the action to be displayed directly in the first display object (AZ).

2. Operator interface as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the industrial display data of the first display object (AZ) comprise a message window (M) of the technical process.

3. Operator interface as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the industrial display data of the first display object (AZ) include a graph (GR) to display the time characteristic of a measured value of the technical process.

4. Operator interface as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the industrial display data of the first display object (AZ) comprise a data input field (EB1, EB2, EB3) to specify a parameter value of the technical process.

5. Operator interface as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the processing unit comprises:

a) fifth means to process display data of a third (US) of the display objects to simulate at least one toggle element (US), and

b) sixth means to associate the detected input position (P) with the at least one toggle element (US),

wherein the input position (P) on the touch-sensitive display unit (B) is associated either with the at least one first display object (AZ) or with the second display object (K), in accordance with a toggle state of the toggle element.

6. Operator interface as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the touch-sensitive display unit comprises a touch panel.

7. Operator interface as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the processing unit comprises fifth means to adjust a ratio of respective output densities of the superimposed display data of the first and the second display objects.

8. Operator interface as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the first and second means comprise software routines.

9. Operator interface as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the software routines comprise at least one microprogram integrated in a microprocessor.

10. An apparatus comprising:

a touch-sensitive display unit displaying display objects and detecting inputs from a user; and

a processor comprising:

a first module that processes display data of a first display object that provides information regarding a technical process and display data of a second display object that simulates an on-screen keyboard having keyboard elements (T),

a second module that superimposes the first and the second display objects on the display unit such that the on-screen keyboard and the first display object appear overlapping and mutually transparent on the touch-sensitive display unit, and

a third module that processes detected inputs from the touch-sensitive display and outputs updated display data to the first module to update the first display object while superimposed with the second display object.

11. The apparatus according to Claim 10, further comprising a fourth module that regulates a display density ratio of the first and the second display objects on the touch-sensitive display in accordance with a further user input to the touch-sensitive display.

12. A method, comprising:

displaying display data providing information regarding a technical process on a touch-screen as a first display object;

superimposing a second display object on the touch-screen such that the second display object is transparent on the touch-screen with respect to the first display object, whereby the first display object and the second display object are simultaneously visible to a user on the touch-screen; and

updating the first display object while the second display object is superimposed on the first display object and while both the first display object and the second display object are visible to the user.

13. The method according to Claim 12, wherein an actuation of the second display object by a user on the touch-screen prompts the update of the first display object on the touch-screen.